

A N
A C C O U N T
O F T H E
E A R T H Q U A K E S
W H I C H H A P P E N E D A T
LEGHORN in ITALY,

Between the 5th and 16th of *January*, 1742.

By the Rev. Mr. *HORTON*, Schoolmaster at
Hampton, at that Time Chaplain to the *British*
Factory there.



L O N D O N :

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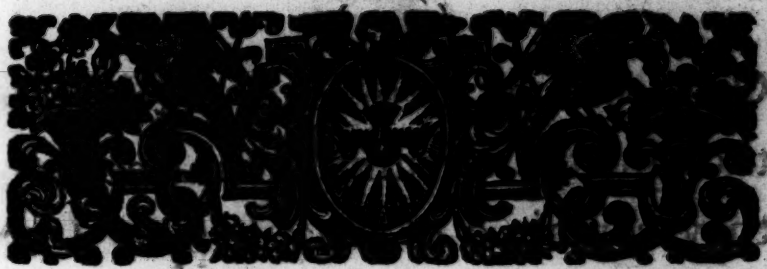
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THE NATIONAL


ANTHROPOLOGICAL

MUSEUM





*An Account of the EARTH-
QUAKES which happened at
LEGHORN.*

HE following Relation
of the Earthquakes
with which God was
pleas'd to visit the City
of *Leghorn* in *Tuscany*, towards
the Beginning of the Year 1742,
is chiefly compos'd from several
Italian Papers which were pub-
lish'd on that Occasion, and col-
lected by me while I resided there
as Chaplain to the *British* Factory.

On looking them over lately, I thought the circumstantial Account they contain'd of what happen'd at that Time, not unworthy of the public Curiosity, nor like to be wholly useless towards engaging our own Attention to the religious Lessons which Providence reads to Mankind in these awful Instances of the divine Power and Mercy, especially at a Time when our Thankfulness for the late Deliverances seems to be still mix'd with Apprehensions, which indeed are but too justly founded on a Sense of having most righteously deserv'd severer Chastisements. I could willingly have been excused from the Trouble of digesting these Materials for Want of Leisure to do it accurately, and had actually recommended the Papers

pers to another Hand, but no Progress being made for several Days in the Translation, I rather chose to undertake this Extract myself, than deprive the Public of such little Service as I thought some Account of them might be of. Such as it is, I hope it will be candidly read; and I pray God, it may in some Measure answer the good Ends intended by the Publication.

This Series of Earthquakes, from the $\frac{5}{16}$ of *January*, 1742, to the $\frac{16}{27}$ of the same Month, was preceded by a Winter uncommonly turbulent even in those Parts, which, by their Situation on a Plain near the Sea, lie expos'd to the Wind from every Quarter. It had been
observ'd

observ'd that the Winds shifted more remarkably than usual to opposite Points between Morning and Evening, and particularly that, after the Winter Solstice, there prevail'd a Wind from the Southward extraordinarily hot; and People began already to be uneasy with the Apprehensions of a sickly Season to ensue from their Continuance. The first Shocks of the Earthquake put the Inhabitants in an universal Consternation; which was greatly heightened by the Credit which an Almanack, under the Name of *Chiaravalle* of *Milan*, bore among the People. This suppos'd Astrologer had predicted a very violent one for the $\frac{17}{28}$; and tho', to the best of my Recollection, it neither

pointed

pointed out the Place where, nor the Time of the Earthquake exactly, for it really happen'd about twenty-four Hours sooner, while I was actually engaged in persuading some of my Acquaintance not to be under any Alarm on that Account, yet the Terror it rais'd was so much increased by this Accident, that great Numbers retired immediately to *Pisa* or the neighbouring Places. And those whose Necessity obliged them to attend the City in the Day-time, submitted to any Inconveniencies of Lodging in the Country, rather than sleep at Home till after the $\frac{24}{6}$ ^{*Feb.*} _{*March*}; when the same Impostor had foretold another, but the Event then proved both his Ignorance and Dishonesty.

The 5th of *January* was a tolerably fair Day. In the Morning there was a light Breeze to the South West. About Five in the Evening there arose a pretty thick stinking Mist, which appear'd and spread itself like a dark Smoak about half a Yard above the Rôofs of the Houses: about 7 $\frac{1}{4}$, Father *Pedini*, whose Observations I chiefly follow, took Notice of a small Trembling of the Chamber-floor, which, at first, he rather judg'd might proceed from some violent Motion in another Room; but finding every Thing very quiet, went to the Window, and observ'd a light Breeze from the North East. The Mist was dispers'd, but there still appear'd a Sort of Duskishness in the Air. In about a quarter of
an

an Hour afterwards, the Chamber began to shake again, tho' not very violently, and the Lamps on the Table mov'd towards the East. The Bells then were rung from all the Churches (as usual on such Occasions) and he went out and stay'd abroad till Nine. He observ'd that the Stench of the Air was gone, but the Air itself grew gradually thicker and more condens'd, but still whitish. Round the Moon appear'd a Circle of a vast Circumference, without the least Cloud: The rest of the Hemisphere was foggy. This my Author says frequently happens. As to myself, I have never observ'd any thing like it at home or abroad, and very well remember that it seem'd very extraordinary, and sur-

priz'd the Spectators very greatly. A little after 9 he went home, and met with a violent Shock upon the Stairs, which threw him twice to the Westward: He was under some Difficulty to save himself from falling down them. He describes the Motion of the House by the Terms of Succussion and Oscillation, and judges that it lasted the Time it would take to repeat an *Ave Maria*. About half an Hour after Three in the Morning, there happen'd two small Shocks like the two first, at a very little Distance from each other; another about three quarters after Four, and another about an Hour afterwards. Immediately after the last fell a small Rain, but exceeding cold, which

which turn'd to Snow between 7 and 8 in the Morning, and it continued to snow pretty hard till after One. The rest of this Day and the next following, there was no distinct Earthquake, tho' the Earth was observ'd now and then to wave and tremble a little. The $\frac{8}{19}$ at Sun rise there were certain very thick Clouds between the East and South, which dispers'd as the Sun got higher, and left only a thin whitish Mist in the Air, and this went wholly off about 9. A small Wind blew from the North East which soon ceas'd, and was succeeded by one from the Westward. The Sun shone violently hot, to such a Degree as to affect the Heads of those who stood expos'd to it. At about half an Hour

after 11, began a certain rumbling Noise which inspir'd a general Horror, and was immediately follow'd by the Earthquake. The Shaking of the Houses continued about 8 or 10 Seconds; the Shock was a kind of Thrust or Impulse, and the Oscillation or Waving from the West to the East. At Noon there follow'd a second impulsive Shock, which lasted about 3 Seconds. The Ground mov'd continually till 4 o'Clock, and then follow'd a third like that at half an Hour after 11. About 7, half an Hour after 8, and 20 Minutes afterwards, there were three small Shocks, and from that Time none till about half an Hour after 4 the next Afternoon, and then a very small one. At about a quarter after

after 10 there was a Shock very like the great One of the 8th, except that this was a Succussion and the Oscillation from the South to the North, and continued about 10 or 12 Seconds. After this follow'd a sensible Waving of the Ground, with very small Intervals, till about One in the Afternoon the next Day. At 4 o'Clock there was a small Shake not much taken notice of.

Several Fishermen, who were between the Rocks called *Meloria* and the Island *Gorgona* to the West of the Island at the Time of the great Earthquake on the 8th, reported that they saw a Part of the Sea, but no very large Tract of it, rage violently on a sudden, and vast Waves
of

of Water rise with so dreadful a Noise that they concluded themselves inevitably lost. Happily for them the Waves past on one Side of them, but put their Vessels in so extraordinary and violent a Motion that they could scarce keep their hold on board them. They observ'd that a small Mist or Cloud rose from the Waves, which might probably be a Surf occasion'd by the violent Commotion of the Waters. They kept their Eyes upon this tempestuous Sea, which mov'd rapidly on towards *Leghorn*, and seem'd to break upon the old Fortrefs, which they lost sight of for a little while, and imagin'd the Town was overwhelm'd. The Master of a Ship, which arriv'd there soon after, reported,

reported, that at a few Miles distance to the Westward of *Cape Corso* in *Corfica*, he was amaz'd to find himself at once engag'd among contrary Currents of extreme Rapidity, with so confus'd and impetuous a Movement of the Waters that tho' he had the Advantage of a favourable Wind he imagin'd he must have been lost, if his Deliverance had not prov'd almost as sudden as the Danger he was in; and this was found to happen just before the Time of the Earthquake abovemention'd. From the $\frac{9}{20}$ to the $\frac{14}{25}$ at 4 in the Afternoon, the Earth seem'd to be in a continual Trembling and Waving, and this Supposition was confirm'd by Experiments of Vessels plac'd upon the Ground, the

Water

Water in which was observ'd to be in continual Motion. At this Time the Movement was something greater than before, and after that it ceas'd till about three quarters after 11 in the Morning of the $\frac{16}{27}$.

We were then in Hopes these Convulsions might be entirely over, when about a quarter before Noon of the $\frac{16}{27}$ already mention'd, was heard an horrible Roar, which was immediately follow'd by three most dreadful Earthquakes. They began first with a Succussion, then an impulsive Motion of terrible Force, and lastly a Succussion still more violent than the former. The Noise and Rumbling under Ground was quite frightful, and the Earth seem'd
to

to twist and wreathe like a Whirlpool. The Movement and Oscillation of the Buildings continued about 30 or 32 Seconds from East to the West.

These Movements are otherwise described : By, first, a violent Tremor ; then an undulating, or waving like that of the Water ; and at last a sudden Rise and Fall of the Earth, which split the Walls of almost every House, and threw down several Floors, Roofs, and Door and Window Cases.

It was distinctly observ'd, that about two Hours before, the Sea rose to an extraordinary Height ; and for half an Hour the Dogs

C

barked

barked continually. The Wind, which blew fresh from the Westward, fail'd at once; and the Sun, which till then shone very clear, cast a faint whitish Light. A thick Mist form'd itself in the Air, caus'd by the Dust which flew from the splitting of the Walls and shaking of the Buildings, of which scarce any one escaped without very considerable Damage. A Part of the Roof of *St. John's Church* fell in, and several Persons were buried under the Ruins, but two only killed, and not many wounded; Part of the Floors of the Palace *di Rosciano* also fell in, and one poor Woman lost her Life there: Which three, to the best of my Recollection, were
all

all the mortal Accidents which attended this Earthquake.

About 3 quarters after One, there was a small Shock, but nothing in Comparison to the foregoing.

No Words can sufficiently describe the Horror and Confusion of the Inhabitants, and it would be difficult to paint the Variety of Distresses to which the People were expos'd, notwithstanding the Care of the Magistrates and Clergy, who indeed exerted themselves very laudibly on this Occasion. The Houses were generally deserted, the Ships and Vessels in the Mole afforded a Refuge to great Numbers, and the Houses on the Plain and neighbour-

ing Villages received many more, but many were still obliged to lodge in the Fields and open Places. The Poor must have suffered extremely, if a general Spirit of Beneficence had not largely contributed to their Relief, towards which the *British* Factory subscribed very largely.

The Country Houses suffered very little, and the Earthquake was scarce felt at *Montenero*, about 4 Miles off. Some People reckon'd about fifty Shocks in the Series of these Calamities, others lessen the Number of such as were considerable to thirteen. It is remarkable that the four strongest were preceded by very light Tremblings and Noises as if something had fallen down, and that

that the latter were always louder and more violent than the former, encreasing to such a Degree, that the third cracked and weakened the Houses, Walls and Fabrics, and the fourth had very nearly laid the whole City in Ruins.

All kinds of Animals seemed greatly terrified with the Shakes: Several were observed to tremble and be in great Disorder before the Earthquake came on. The Pigeons fluttered about the Houses as if afraid to settle, and a prodigious Quantity of Water-Fowl was found dead in the Lake and Canals near the City.

The

The State of the Place for some Time afterwards was very deplorable, great Part of the Houses not safely habitable, and above forty obliged to be immediately shored up, and the Walls of most so rent and shatter'd, ~~that~~ it required a vast Quantity of Iron Bars to chain them together and secure the Roofs and Floors. The Streets were scarce passable for the Timbers set to support the Fronts of the Houses. Such were the terrible Consequences of an Earthquake which lasted for not above half a Minute, in a City as well built as most in *Europe*, and with better Materials perhaps than any in *England*, to which, next to the Mercy of God, was owing it's Escape from a total Destruction.

The

The Sense of so great a Deliverance, produced an unanimous Resolution of the Magistrates, Clergy and People of *Leghorn*, to observe a solemn Fast for ever on the said ¹⁶/₂₇ *January*, prohibiting any public or private Balls, Masquerades, or other Diversions of the Carnival, for that Day; with an humble Application to his Royal Highness the Grand Duke of *Tuscany*, [now Emperor] that the public *Veglioni*, or Masquerades at the Theatre there, might be for ever abolished; which Request was approved and confirmed, by an Order from the Council of Regency at *Florence*.

About this Time I was favoured with the Copy of an *Italian* Sonnet,
which

which I subjoin here. I have forgot the Name of the Author, nor can recollect whether it first appeared on this Occasion: If the following Imitation of it in *English* should be esteemed imperfect, I shall have at least the Merit of giving some abler Hand an Opportunity to translate it better.

II. TERRAMOTO.

SONNETTO.

DEH! qual possente Man, con forze ignote,
 Il terreno a crollar si spesso riede?
 Non è chiuso Vapor, come altri crede,
 Ne fognato Tridente il Suol percuote.

Certo la Terra si risente e scuote
 Perchè de gl' empî ormai la calca il piede,
 Et i nostri corpi impatiente chiede
 Per riempir le sue spelonche vuote.

E Linguaggio del Ciel che non s'intende

Il fulmine, il turbine, il baleno;

Or parla anche la Terra in note orrende.

Che se l'Uomo esser vuol tutto terreno,

Ne del Cielo il parlar straniero intende,

Il parlar della Terra intenda almeno?

The EARTHQUAKE.

A SONNET.

WHat pow'rful Hand, with Force unknown,
Can these repeated Tremblings make?

Or do th' imprison'd Vapours groan?

Or do the Shores with fabled Tridents
shake?

Ah no! the Tread of impious Feet,

The conscious Earth impatient bears;

And shudd'ring with the guilty Weight,

One common Grave for her bad Race pre-
pares.

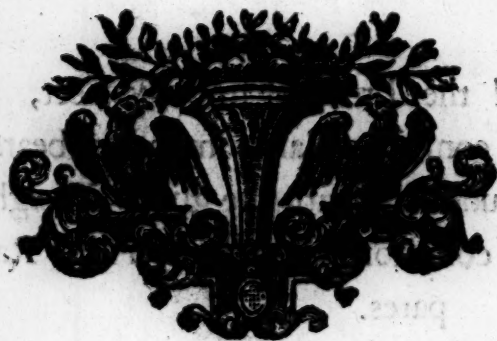
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Deaf

Deaf to the Tempest's dreadful Sound,
 Blind to the Light'ning's vengeful Glare,
 New Terrors rebel Man surround,
 And Earth with Heav'n ally'd proclaims
 the War!

Still, will thy stubborn Heart defy the Blow,
 While Thunder rows above, and Earthquakes
 heave below?

F I N I S.



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